

House-passed bill would create jobs and increase residential energy efficiency through home retrofits

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, with U.S. Rep. Rush Holt's support, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Home Star Energy Retrofit Act of 2010, legislation aimed at creating jobs and increasing residential energy efficiency through home retrofits. Holt is a cosponsor of the bill, which would authorize the creation of a Home Star program to spur home energy retrofits by providing direct incentives to homeowners to install American-made energy-saving products and conduct whole-home retrofits. Home Star includes two types of consumer incentives: a Silver Star path to provide in-store rebates for specific energy-saving investments, and a Gold Star path to reward homeowners who conduct a comprehensive energy audit and implement a variety of measures to reduce energy use.

The bill has the endorsement of a broad range of business, labor, environmental, and consumer groups, including the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce.

"Making home energy efficiency improvements isn't just about cost savings. It's also about job creation. Homes don't weatherize and retrofit themselves. A home owner has to hire someone to install the windows, redo the insulation, and make other improvements - and they in turn will hire people to help them do the work," Holt said. "This legislation supports our efforts to create jobs, save energy, and protect our environment."

The Silver Star program will provide up-front rebates for the installation of specific energy-saving technologies, including insulation, duct sealing, windows and doors, air sealing, and water heaters. Homeowners will be able to receive up to \$3,000 in rebates under Silver Star.

The Gold Star program rewards homeowners who conduct a comprehensive energy audit and implement comprehensive measures to reduce energy use throughout the home. Consumers will receive \$3,000, or half the cost, for measures that reduce energy use by 20 percent, and can receive up to \$8,000 when additional energy savings are achieved. Home Star also creates an innovative financing program to be sure that energy efficiency investments continue after the program's conclusion.

In April, Holt highlighted the clean energy economy at work in New Jersey at the weatherization of an East Brunswick home by a New Jersey clean energy company. According to estimates

from the homeowner's contractor, the retrofits decrease energy costs by at least 40 percent after the replacement of appliances, completing air sealing, and replacing insulation. Homeowners currently are eligible for federal tax credit for home energy efficiency improvements, but many can't wait for tax season to recoup upfront costs. The Home Star Energy Retrofit Act would provide immediate rebates.

In December 2009, Holt and members of the Sustainable Energy & Environment Coalition (SEEC) in advocating for the creation of a residential energy efficiency program in a letter to congressional leaders that outlined coalition priorities for domestic job creation.

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